/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [755] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] [293] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

A C 326 [758 cont.]

Silversmiths and blacksmiths are almost the only artisans; the former occupied themselves earlier with the ornamentation of weapons in particular; the latter, of whom there are two or three in every village, make dagger blades, sickles, bits for horses, horseshoes, and the like. Among the Abkhaz their profession is particularly honored and esteemed (see p. 25 , cf. Africa).

A C [411] [412] [492] E 437 C 439

In earlier times trade was based exclusively on barter. Before the incursion of the Russians (end of the eighteenth century), the Cherkess traded salt, among other things, to the Osset, bringing it on large, two-

C [411]

Fig. 450. Cherkess pistol with flintlock, bone pommel, and silver fittings (1/4 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

C [493] [317] wheeled carts, drawn by six to eight oxen, from the salt-lakes along the Caspian Sea between Terek and Kuma. As products of their industry they sold principally wax, honey, skins, cloth, capes, and the like, as well as slaves. Linen material in pieces the size of a shirt served as a measure of value for all wares.

C 436

At that time the men, when not engaged in war, devoted themselves by preference to hunting and raiding. In order not to be understood by other people, and also to confuse the game, two kinds of secret language were used: the words in the one (šakobže) are completely different from the Cherkess language; in the other (farsipse) a ri or fe is inserted after every syllable.

C 224 721 C 198

[759] [Fig. 451 appears here.]

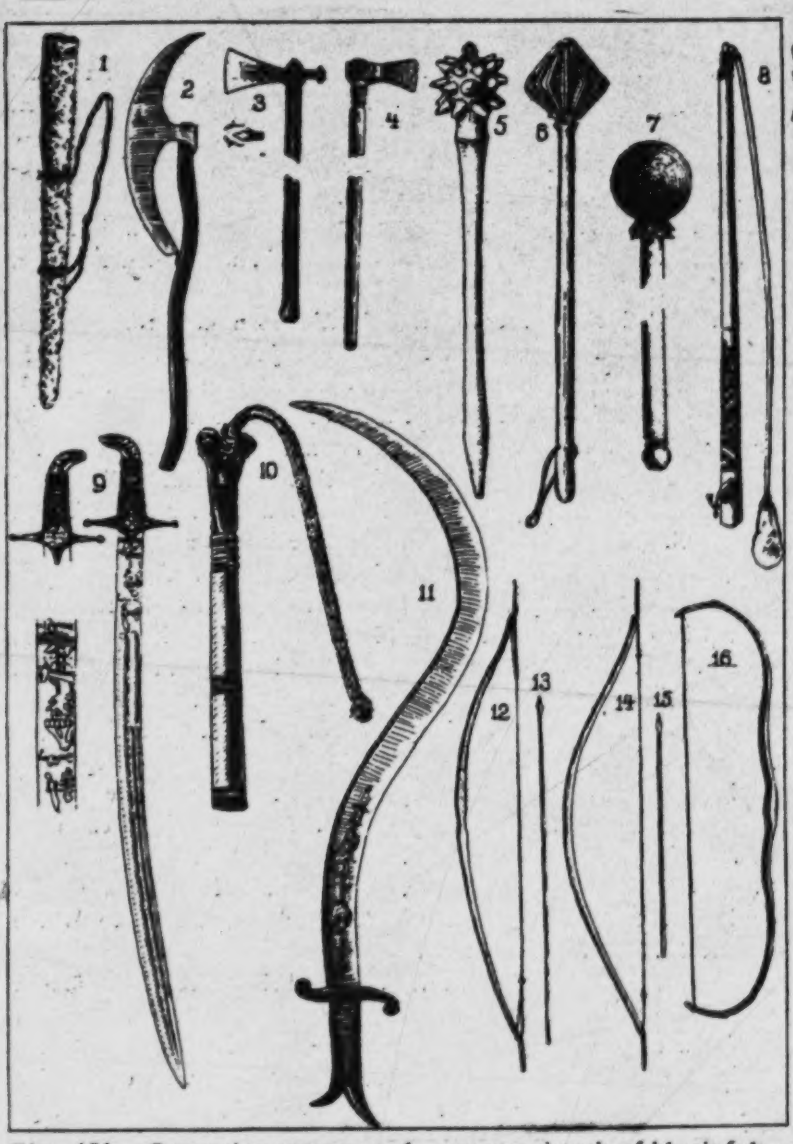

Fig. 451. Caucasian weapons: 1, weapon sheath of black felt with leather fittings; 2, 3, 4, battle-axes with iron blades and wooden stocks; 5, 6, 7, clubs with iron heads; 8, knout with handle decorated with silver; 9, sword with Georgian inscription; 10, knout with plaited leather cord; 11, saber (allegedly Armenian); 12, 14, bows with string of twisted hemp rope; 13, 15, arrows with iron points; 16, bow of horn and bone (Turkish style) (1, 1/22 nat. size; 2-4, 1/10 nat. size; 5-10, 1/7 nat. size; 9, 1/9 nat. size; 12, 14, 16, 1/16 nat. size; 13, 15, 1/15 nat. size) (From Count J. Zichy).